

# The Defeat of the Fifth Army in France: London Book Gossip

## Life of Suvorof Career of an Eccentric Military Genius

SUVOROF. By W. Lyon Blase. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co. 12.

THE name of Suvorof is neither well nor favorably known outside of Russia. Scarcely one person has heard of the great Russian general where ten are familiar with the exploits of Napoleon or Frederick the Great. Lord Byron summed up his estimate of Suvorof in the bitter line, "Hero, buffoon, half demon and half girl."

This is scarcely fair. Suvorof was no more of a demon than the average military commander of his time, and he possessed distinguished merit as a general. He was tested in many wars and he was never found wanting. Whether called upon to lead the Russian armies against the Turks, or against the Asiatic methods of warfare; against the Poles in their desperate struggles for independence or against the fiery troops of revolutionary France, he always demonstrated the same high military gifts—audacity tempered with good judgment, quickness in decision and vigor in execution, the power to estimate his opponents' strength at its true value with uncanny accuracy.

Suvorof's most spectacular achievement was his last—his campaign against the French in Switzerland. The story of his marches and battles among the Alps is picturesque and striking to the last degree. The campaign failed because of the defeat of one of his lieutenants, but the daring and endurance of the old general and his troops are beyond praise.

Innumerable stories are told of Suvorof's eccentricities, and some of them are doubtless apocryphal. However, there is no doubt that the illustrious general was something of a buffoon. In one of his early campaigns he is said to have habitually awakened his men by crowing like a cock. After his capture of Warsaw in 1794 he was given the rank of field marshal by the Empress Catherine. Upon receiving the news he set a number of stools in a row and gleefully leaped over them, one after another, reciting the names of the generals whom he had passed in the race for promotion.

Mr. Blase's book includes a number of similar anecdotes, which lend a touch of piquancy and lightness to an admirable military biography.

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## General Gough's Leadership In March, 1918, Vindicated

## Responsibility for the Defeat Before St. Quentin Placed on Shoulders of British War Council

By William L. McPherson

THE FIFTH ARMY IN MARCH, 1918. By W. Shaw Sparrow. With an introduction by General Sir Hubert Gough. Published by John Lane, the Bodley Head, London, and New York. 46.

MR. SPARROW'S book is a protest against the injustice done by the British War Council—and especially by Premier Lloyd George—to General Sir Hubert Gough and the ill-fated British 5th Army. It is marked by an intensity of personal feeling which might be expected to weaken its value as military criticism. The author is full of moral indignation and determined to set a wrong right. He accomplishes his purpose not so much because of his emotional vehemence, but because he has a good case.

Gough was badly treated after the defeat of the 5th Army. Lloyd George who must have been conscious of his own major responsibilities for the loss of the Battle of St. Quentin and the uncovering of Amiens, tried to use Gough as a scapegoat. The latter was relieved of his command and an unfairly colored account of the defeat was given to Parliament and the country. General Gough, a gallant soldier and gentleman, says of Lloyd George's conduct:

"Can we wonder that the country failed to estimate the truth when a minister of the crown, who was in a position to winnow facts from foolish rumors, could repeat, even to me, that 'the troops left their positions on many occasions without sufficient reason'? If such was the case it was certainly not true of the troops of the Fifth Army, as is sufficiently proved by the numbers who remained in their positions and are buried there. But fear does not make men either just or generous: it is only the greatest and noblest characters who can maintain these qualities under such conditions, and there is no doubt that our ministers and others were torn with fear during those fateful weeks."

Gough was sacrificed to this feeling of panic. He was an available victim on whom to saddle responsibility for a disaster due to vices in the British government's military policy.

Haig's official report (held up for months by the government and elided in part) put matters in a truer light. Ludendorff's first attack was fully anticipated. There was every indication that it would fall mainly on the 5th Army. Haig preferred to lose ground on that part of his front, if he had to lose ground at all, because this sector was furthest away from the coast. The British line had been extended south twenty-seven miles in the winter of 1917-18. Gough was left to hold forty-two miles, with only fourteen infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions. Three of the infantry divisions were kept in reserve far back by Haig and two of them weren't up until the second day of the fighting. Against Gough's weak force Hutier and

Marwitz employed forty-three infantry divisions.

Byng's 3d Army, to the north of the 5th, held only twenty-six and two-seventh miles of front with seventeen infantry divisions. Opposing them were twenty-four German infantry divisions. Yet Byng's right and center were as unable to resist Ludendorff's overwhelming attack as Gough's army was. Byng lost Capuame and Albert. In the latter days of the retreat his line showed more gaps than the 5th Army's did. It broke connection with Gough and the latter was forced to take over the defence of territory originally assigned to Byng. Yet Byng was neither censured nor removed from command.

The British War Council had allowed the British fighting strength in France to run too low. In the winter of 1917-1918 the battalions in each brigade were reduced from four to three. Yet 200,000 British troops were kept in England and Ireland. They had been withheld deliberately, because Lloyd George distrusted Haig's leadership, which had caused such enormous casualty lists in 1916 and 1917. Haig was consequently left with inadequate reserves. He couldn't reinforce Gough sufficiently, or Byng, either, and the arrangement he had made with Pétain for French aid was an illusory substitute, for French aid couldn't and didn't arrive in time to relieve the hard-driven 5th Army. Gough made a good fight under existing conditions. His army wasn't beaten because of poor leadership.

Lloyd George's defense, as set forth by Captain Peter E. Wright, is that the Allied line in France could have been held, in March, 1918, if a strategic reserve had been created and put at the disposition of Foch and the Allied War Council in Paris. The British Prime Minister favored this rational scheme. But he didn't put it through, and Foch was called to command only when Ludendorff was at the gates of Amiens.

It is the merit of Mr. Sparrow's book that it shows convincingly that what Captain Wright calls the greatest defeat in the history of the British army was due not to mistakes in the field, but to vacillations and shortcomings within the British War Council.

Are Strikes Moral?

THE MORALITY OF THE STRIKE. By Ronald A. McLean. Published by P. J. Kennedy & Sons. \$1.75.

THIS question is generally answered in the affirmative by Father McLean, who surveys the labor problem from the viewpoint of Catholic faith. Citing the opinions of eminent ecclesiastical authorities, Father McLean holds that the strike, as a weapon in the hands of labor, cannot be pronounced immoral per se. He also condemns as unjust and unworkable schemes of compulsory arbitration, such as have been attempted in Australia and New Zealand. Father McLean's work should command attention from moralists and economists alike, for the author is obviously well versed in both aspects of his subject.



WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS, the famous Irish poet, whose collected verse has just been published by The Macmillan Company

## A New Triangle Projected In Story by Philip Gibbs

## Famous Correspondent Portrays Son's Reactions to Parents' Quarrel With Mastery Skill

By Dr. Willis Fletcher Johnson  
BEAUTY AND NICK. By Philip Gibbs. Published by the Devin-Adair Company. \$2.

WE HAVE here a new triangle, or at least an unusual one. It is not husband, wife and mistress, for "Beauty" has no mistress. It is not husband, wife and lover, though "Beauty" has a lover, and indeed more than one. But it is a triangle of father, mother and son; these three, and the chief of these is the son. Given a wife who is beautiful and brilliant, but selfish, vain, extravagant and quite destitute of truth, honor and moral decency, and a husband who is hard working and plodding, true and devoted, partly blind and partly over-patient, but at last inexorable in his righteous wrath, and we have the elements of the conventional problem novel. But the unconventional enters when the wife is a mother and the husband a father, and we have to consider the effect of their relationship and of their final irreparable estrangement not upon themselves but upon their son.

Sir Philip Gibbs has given us a

character study of this son which deserves perpetually an outstanding place among literary masterpieces. From childhood to manhood, in a multiplicity and variety of scenes and incidents and under the stress of every emotion and passion that moves the human heart, he enters into and depicts from within the very soul of the youth. The boy inherits something of the temperament of each of his parents and has a passionate love for both.

At first he has all the ingenuousness of childhood, though he instinctively, without knowing why, revolts against the "Beast"—a singularly repulsive creature, by the way—who happens to be his mother's lover at the time. A little later the first crisis comes, culminating in divorce, and the boy grows to manhood under the care of his father, imbued with truthfulness, cleanliness and honor. Then the unquenched love which he cherished for the mother of his childhood memories impels him to seek her and to strive for reconciliation between the pair. This the father and husband refuses, whereupon the son deserts his father and casts his lot for a time with his mother.

There follows the second and incomparably grater crisis, when the mother, to facilitate one of her own rapacious amours, deliberately attempts, with all the wiles of an utter wanton, to debauch her own son and involve him in an unclean and criminal intrigue. This culminating horror frees the son's vision from the glamor which filial piety and chivalry have created, and he flees from the noxious coils which have been spun about him, to rescue his stricken and desolate father from despair, and with him to begin a new existence.

It is not a pretty tale, though touched here and there with idyllic charm and illumined with hearty humor. But it is true, in general and in detail; in relation of incident, in portrayal of character and in analysis of motive. It has, moreover, the fine qual-

## What London Literary Folk Are Thinking and Writing

## Sinclair Lewis Says Authors Must Think as Well as Write—American-Made Books— A Criticism of Mencken

By Arthur S. Draper

LONDON, June 18.—Sinclair Lewis is visiting here, and the author of Main Street has many social engagements to fill. Even in summer, tea-time is a favorite hour for bringing together London's literary folk, though the hosts must be careful not to have her "at home" conflict with one of the three-day cricket matches in which a team of Australian amateurs is doing its best to sink all England in a gloom heavier than we had in 1918, when Haig said "Our backs are to the wall."

Clement Shorter, William Pett Ridge, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, E. Phillips Oppenheim and many other English writers drank tea the other day with Sinclair Lewis at the house of Lady Hodder-Williams, whose husband is the senior partner of the publishing house of Hodder & Stoughton. There was considerable talk about poker, especially as Mr. Phillips Oppenheim has been arguing with the legal authorities on the question of when it is lawful to play the game and when it is a criminal offense; but interesting as it would be to know Mr. Lewis's views regarding English poker, we shall have to be satisfied with his comments on the difference between newspaper reporting and fiction writing. He says there is a difference. "I have to train myself, now that I am an author, to write slowly," he says. "As a journalist I had got so that I could sit down and write about anything—an article on Etruscan sculpture, for instance—at a moment's notice. That fatal gift stands in my way as an author."

A journalist present suggested that as an author he had to think as well as write, and Mr. Lewis nodded assent.

It is the general opinion here that American books have a higher standard of typographical excellence than those published in England. Says a writer in The Westminster Gazette:

"The paper, the type and all the materials may be exactly similar to those which our English publishers use, and yet there is something in the way of always seeming to be pure narrative, told for the story's own sake, and not halting the action to indulge in metaphysics or moralizing."

It is never either "preachy" or puritan, though in a less masterful hand than Sir Philip Gibbs's it would have been in great danger of being one or the other, and probably both. It might, too, have degenerated into either sentimentality or melodrama, but happily avoids both. Trying as it is the theme, the treatment of it is always clean, manly, straightforward. It points a moral, but it does so only as every relation of timely truths must point a moral, as inevitably the sowing of seed produces harvest.

It is the drama of every child of clashing and divorced parents, in which fittingly the child is made the hero of the play. In the book every shred of the sympathy which in mere weakness she might have commanded, while the father's appeal to human interest is dulled by a certain stolidity and blindness, but from every point of view and to every observer the appeal of the son is irresistible. And that is the supreme truth of the whole story, whether in fiction or in real life. Husband and wife in harmony or in discord reap chiefly what they have sown, while the child must gather the tares which others' hands have planted. That is the truth with which this tense and vital tale is instinct, and which the author has presented with the same assured authority with which he has so often addressed himself to us on the more tense or vital themes of war and politics.

while he writes as he does. And yet after reading his skillful study of Mr. Arnold Bennett's fiction we cannot say less of him than he himself says of another writer:

"There was in him a vast delicacy of perception, a high feeling, a sensitiveness to beauty. And there was in him, too, under all his platitudes, a poignant sense of the finite, romance and mystery of human life."

The American army of golfers can find plenty of amusing incidents and incidentally some priceless hints on improving one's game by reading Fifty Years of Golf: My Memories, by Andrew Kirkaldy, the professional at St. Andrews, the headquarters of the royal and ancient game, and the venue of this year's open championship. Kirkaldy tells a host of delightful stories about well-known men and women, many of whom are more famous in Parliament and the army than they are in the golfing world.

## Poems by Yeats

SELECTED POEMS. By William Butler Yeats. Published by the Macmillan Company. 42.50.

THE lover of romantic verse finds in the work of William Butler Yeats a strange and irresistible magic, born of a haunting beauty of thought, expressed in melodious and majestic rhythms. Yeats has assimilated all the folklore, the rich traditions of his native Ireland, and he returns the old themes of the Celtic bards enriched and made still more beautiful by his mastery of poetic imagery. The present volume, which includes the best of his writings, gives an adequate measure of the quality of his genius.

## Children's Stories

THE MEADOW FOLK'S STORY HOUR. By Prudence Guelle. Published by the Greck Publishing Company. 65 cents.

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